
Stephanie Schrader (ed.). *Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India*

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REFERENCES

Stephanie Schrader (ed.), With contributions by Catherine Glynn, Yael Rice, William W. Robinson. *Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018, 148 p., 50 figures, 62 colour plates, ISBN 9781606065525

- 1 Comprising four essays, the catalogue accompanied an exhibition of 23 Indian-inspired drawings attributable to the Dutch artist Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669) and their possible Mughal prototypes. While the link between the two groups of artwork has been discussed in specialist literature for more than a century (and it was recognised by experts even before), this exhibition, held at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, between 13 March and 24 June 2018, brought them together for the first time since the seventeenth century. The title of the book and exhibition, along with the general thrust of the catalogue, cement the consensus about Rembrandt's authorship of the Dutch copies, although the essays do not deny that this is but a well-supported attribution. Similarly, the group of Mughal originals may or may not be the very items which the Dutch copier possessed, even if in some instances it seems certain, and in other instances the originals and the copies evidently go back to a common prototype.
- 2 In "Rembrandt and the Mughal Line: Artistic Inspiration in the Global City of Amsterdam" (pp. 5-28), Stephanie Schrader positions Rembrandt in the principal international trading hub of the mid-seventeenth century, pointing out the availability in Amsterdam of Indian album pages and also Asian paper, the support of the Mughal-inspired Dutch drawings. On the south-east corner of this trade map, we find the Indian equivalent of Amsterdam in the city of Surat, Gujarat, where the Dutch disembarked to cater for the Indian market, and gathered Indian goods to be shipped to Europe. With the establishment of the Dutch factory at Surat in 1616, the history of trade between

the two countries reached a turning point. Based on a careful analysis of the Indian monarchs depicted (all three rulers between Jahāngīr, Šāh Jahān, and Awrangzīb) and iconographic analysis of comparative material, Schrader concludes that the series of drawings is datable to around 1656 and 1661, i.e., the years of struggle following Rembrandt's bankruptcy.

- 3 Catherine Glynn addresses the Indian originals, particularly the genre of Mughal album painting, in her article, entitled "Mughal Masterworks in Rembrandt's Hand" (pp. 29-42). She juxtaposes the working environment of Mughal court artists with that of their Dutch colleagues and investigates the meaning of the same album paintings for a Mughal and a European audience.
- 4 " 'A book of Indian Drawings, by Rembrandt, 25 in number' ", by William W. Robinson (pp. 43-60), traces the provenance of the drawings to their first mention (and first reference to Rembrandt) in a 1747 London sale catalogue, and provides a critical history. Examining the materials and techniques and the observations made by past scholarship, Robinson, like Schrader, places them firmly within Rembrandt's oeuvre, and dates them to the 1656-1661 period. The last essay ("The Global Aspirations of the Mughal Album", by Yael Rice, pp. 61-77) views its subject from a more general perspective. It follows two trajectories: firstly the wide-ranging sources, themes, and even actual compositions (drawings and engravings) which found their way to the albums (including the so-called St. Petersburg and Gulshan Albums) from abroad, and secondly, the dispersal of these albums and the odyssey of the album leaves across India and from India to Iran and Europe, as far as the walls of Palais Schönbrunn in Vienna.

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